

Culture and Communication LOYC 340/2 – Fall 2018

Instructor: Philip Szporer

Thursday 13:15-16:00 Room: CC 305

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Office Hours: by appointment only, Thursday (11:00-13:00) (office location: CC 326)

Objectives

This course is an anthropological approach to variations in cultural experience as they relate to communication. Students explore modes of expression and communication, including performance and visual culture, with a view to examining questions of interpretation, aesthetics, and ethical judgment. The class is intended to develop an awareness of the role of imagination and creativity in expression and interpretation, and sensitivity to the role of cultural and other differences in processes of communication.

Course Text(s)

There is no course text. Readings are posted on the library's Course Reserves list; navigate to the selections listed under "LOYC 340", or on the Moodle page, look for the "Access Course Reserves" tab). Over the duration of the term, selections may be added or deleted from this list.

Course Requirements

Participation is essential. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to articulate their own critical analysis and response through active discussion and written assignments, as well as an oral presentation. In every class, students are expected to come prepared to discuss and respond to the readings and other material (video excerpts) presented during the lecture. Written assignments are based upon individual research work and reflection.

Details about the assignments

• **Moodle reaction entries**

Prior to every Thursday class, students will enter one reaction (about one paragraph) on the course Moodle site, based on one of the readings for that week, unless otherwise noted. Only eight (8) entries are required per student, each valued at 1.25 points. Goal: react critically to the readings. The substance of your entry will, more than likely, focus in on one particular issue. The process of writing in this manner helps students to process the material, and ensures preparedness for the class discussion.

• **Moodle commentaries**

There will be two short 100-word commentaries to be submitted on Oct. 10 and November 14, through specific forums indicated on the Moodle site. Always employ citations, where warranted. These two entries are worth 5% each. Submit your work on the Wednesday preceding class.

• **Response essays**

Two response essays (500 words maximum) are due. Each is designed to focus attention on critical issues based on course readings and visual materials, and class discussions. These assignments provide a vehicle for clarifying your thoughts. They may be written as a series of comments, meditations or personal reflections on the readings. Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size). Hard copy. Always employ citations, where warranted. Due: October

4 and 18.

• **Debate assignment**

Write a key debate question related to the Joseph Boyden controversy and also write your perspective, as you would respond in a debate (250 words maximum). Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size). Hard copy. Always employ citations, where warranted. Due: Oct. 31.

• **Pecha Kucha-Style Presentation Guidelines**

Give a brief talk based on the theme of public art, and critically present the work of one artist within the constraints of the pecha kucha-styled format. Focus of the talk: The aesthetics of sustainability through the presentation of public art or land art.

*You are required to briefly meet with the instructor on October 18, to identify project topics. Parameters for the projects will be discussed in class during week 1-2. A written project proposal of one paragraph will be submitted by email on October 24, at the latest.

In consultation with the instructor, prepare a **four-minute (4) presentation** on an agreed topic. Speak either from notes or from a fully articulated text but either way please bear in mind the time limit and be as succinct as possible in your handling of your material. The images advance and you talk along to the images. Each four-minute presentation will consist of no more than four (4) slides. Please bear in mind the constraints of time: you will be stopped once you reach the four-minute mark.

Note: An accompanying 750-word paper on the same artist/subject matter and focus will be handed in on the date of your presentation (November 22.) Please employ citations, as required. Hard copy.

Checklist

- The better the presentation and discussion, the better the learning outcome for all.
- Be imaginative.
- The main points of your argument should be coherent and clearly expressed.
- Think about how you are going to divide the time allocated for your presentation.
- Evaluations will consider both the quality of content and the efficacy of the presentation.
- Presentations must be conducted in English.

Policy for Writing Evaluation: Students are evaluated on their mastery of language skills. To receive the best grade, you must

- Demonstrate maturity and originality of thought reflected by the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate.
- Sustain the development of a point or idea over the length of the assignment.
- Use organized paragraphs and transitional devices.
- Make conventional use of capitalization and punctuation.
- Use consistently the grammar, syntax and spelling of standard English or French, with particular attention to sentence structure and to agreement between subjects, verbs, pronouns and antecedents.

Assignments may be written in French or English. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with a clear font size, paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references, bibliography, filmography/videography. Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography.

All assignments must be handed in hard copy, and not sent via e-mail. E-mailed assignments will only be accepted in cases of grave illness or circumstance.

Grading Breakdown

Active participation/Attendance	10%
Moodle entries (8)	10% (8 entries @ 1.25 points each)
Commentary (2)	10% (5 points each)
Debate question-response	5%
Pecha Kucha presentation + essay	35% (20% presentation; 15% essay)
Response essays (2)	30% (15 points each)

Attendance/Participation guidelines

Thoughtful and intelligent participation in all class discussion is, of course, encouraged. That said, it is the consistency and quality of one's in-class (and, secondarily, online) participation that will be assessed, not the quantity.

For an 'A'-level Participation mark, the student:

- Attends all classes
- Pays attention
- Volunteers questions or points of interest from films and assigned readings to generate discussion
- Offers ideas willingly and makes thoughtful contributions in discussion
- Responds to other students' ideas by asking questions or building on their points

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of every class. No more than two justifiable absences will be allowed. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you miss one class, your attendance/participation mark will automatically decrease 5%, two absences 10%. Exceptions: if you have a justified absence or a bona fide documented emergency (for example, illness, injury, hospitalization) Please advise early in the term if you are observing religious holidays. Personal travel is not an acceptable reason.

Here is a rough guide that will help you understand how you will be assessed for your attendance-participation grade:

- Attend class every week and say little or nothing: 0-3
- Attend class every week and participate occasionally: 4-7
- If you attend class every week and engage in discussion, listen attentively, and what you have to say is demonstrably informed by the course readings & screenings: 8-10

Lateness policy

Please note that it is exceedingly disruptive to arrive late to class, and students who do so will be marked as absent. Likewise, students who leave early without reason or who skip parts of the lecture will be marked as absent. If there are reasonable grounds to be absent for part of the class, please advise me of your situation; it is your responsibility to take the

necessary measures to arrive on campus early enough. Should you end up arriving late to the lecture, or if your body demands that you leave the room temporarily, please try to be as discrete as possible in order not to disturb your fellow students. Do this by holding the door gently as it closes rather than letting it bang shut on its own.

Late work is not encouraged. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me (or the Department Assistant), and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a point will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e., 1 point, etc.).

Plagiarism

The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as "**the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement**" (Article 16^a).

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone – it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and to ensure you avoid committing any offenses by reading the University's Academic Code of Conduct:

<http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity/plagiarism.html>

Other Course Policies

Language: The language of instruction is English. You may submit your written work in French; however, my comments on your papers will normally be in English.

Electronic Equipment: Turn off and put away all electronic devices, i.e., mobile phones, iPods, videogames, etc. This class is **not** the place to check Facebook, surf, text-message, or engage in other distracting and disruptive behaviour with electronic devices. Save it for after class. If there is a legitimate reason you must leave your mobile phone on, please notify me in advance, put the phone on vibrate mode, and sit in the front row on the aisle so you can easily depart the class to take your urgent call. Students breaching this policy during the lecture will be penalized on their participation grades, including a possible grade of zero for participation, at the discretion of the course instructor. Please take this warning seriously.

Tip: to do well on this course it is recommended that you listen attentively, taking notes with a notebook and pen or pencil. Using a laptop, while it does work better for some note takers, is always a source of potential distraction for even the best-intentioned student. Recent studies have also demonstrated that taking notes longhand (vs. on a laptop) results

in consistently higher levels of knowledge retention and therefore higher evaluation scores among university students.

Food: No eating in class. Take care of hunger before the session.

Chatting in class: Please refrain from distracting chatting with your neighbours, out of respect for other students and the professor. Save conversations until the class is over.

Campus Resources

Students with Disabilities: Students with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations is encouraged to contact the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities at the beginning of the semester. <http://www.concordia.ca/students/accessibility.html>

Student Success Centre: Will assist in improving your academic skills and learning potential (including reading and writing skills). <http://www.concordia.ca/students/success/learning-support.html>

Weekly topics and readings (subject to change)

Week 1 – September 6 Introduction – The course syllabus will be discussed
+ Creating Culture

Reading:

Cynthia Freeland, "Blood and Beauty," in *But Is It Art? An Introduction to Art Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-29.

Week 2 – September 13 The Body Politic

Readings:

Helen Thomas, "The Body in Culture: the Body Project" in *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 34-63.

Anthony Synnott, "Body," in *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self, and Society*. (London: New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 7-37.

Alan Peterson, "The Body in Question: An Introduction," in *The Body in Question: A Socio-cultural Approach* (Abingdon, Oxon: New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-19.

Monday, September 17: Academic withdrawal, with tuition refund, from fall-term courses.

Week 3 – September 20 Expression and Interpretation/Art as Experience

Readings:

John Dewey, "The Act of Expression," in *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigree Books, 1980), p. 58-81.

Richard Shusterman, "Beneath Interpretation," *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 115-138.

Susanne Shawyer, "Occupy Newfoundland and the Dramaturgy of Endurance," *Canadian Theatre Review*, Vol. 157, Winter 2014, 7-11.

Week 4 – September 27 The Street and Public Spaces

Guest: Jen Cressey, researcher. Topic: Embodied Conversation in Public Space.

"Through physical theatre performance, what can be understood about a site's ineffable essence, its properties and values? Can we learn whether it serves its constituents, and why? Might these techniques be used by non-performer communities to explore and reveal their shared spaces, inscribing them with renewed meaning?" – Jen Cressey

Readings:

Adam Gopnik, "The Mindful Museum," *The Walrus*, June 4, 2007, 89.

Kate Thomas, "Ideas Under Glass," *Literary Review of Canada*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 25-27.

Alessandra Nicifero, "Occupy MOMA: The (Risks and) Potentials of a Musée de la danse," *Dance Research Journal*, Volume 46, Number 3, December 2014, 32-44.

Corey Schnobrich, "Public and Publics: the Occupy Movement," *On-Site Review*, 30 (Fall 2013), 13-17.

Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, "Engaged Ephemeral Art: Street Art and the Egyptian Arab Spring," *Transcultural Studies* (2016: 2), 53-88.

Note: International colloquium - *Cybercorporealities: nomadic subjectivity in digital context* - September 27, 28, 29 2018 - Université du Québec à Montréal (will discuss in class)

Week 5 – October 4 The Sensuous Body

Readings:

Adam Gopnick, "Feel Me," *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2016.

David Abram, "The Forgetting and Remembering of the Air," in *The Spell of the Sensuous: Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage, 1996), p. 225-260.

>> Assignment: Response essay # 1, due: October 4

Write about your experience of last week's guest lecture with Jen Cressey.

Week 6 – October 11 The Science of Emotions

Screening: Pixar's *Inside Out* film will be screened in class this week. Your response essay, due next week, is directly related to viewing this animated movie.

+

Independent study time: preparation for your Pecha Kucha-styled presentation.

>> Assignment: Moodle commentary #1, due: Wednesday, Oct.10. Subject of the commentary: Awe can take people out of their own selves and into something larger, and moving them in multi-faceted ways. Write about your own experience of awe. Submit your entry through the designated Forum on the course Moodle site.

Week 7 – October 18 Race and Representation

Readings:

Laina Dawes, "The True Colours of Zines," *Broken Pencil*, 2013, Issue 61, 14-17.

John Lahr, "Under the Skin," *New Yorker*, 28 June 1993 (Vol. 69 Issue 19), 90-93.

Zadie Smith, "Who Owns Black Pain?" *Harper's*, July 2017 (Vol. 335, no. 2006), 85-89.

Robin D'Angelo, "White Fragility," *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 2011 (3:3), 54-70.

>> Assignment: Response essay #2, due: October 18

Respond to Pixar's *Inside Out* and the possibility of watching emotions becoming embodied.

Note – Oct 18: Meetings re Pecha-Kucha-styled Presentations (book a session with instructor during office hours prior to or immediately after class).

>> Wednesday, Oct 24: Submit Pecha Kucha Presentation project proposals, via email.

Week 8 – October 25 Cultural Identities

Readings:

Trinh T. Minh-ha, "A Minute Too Long" in *When the Moon Waxes Red* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 107-116.

Barbara Browning, "Choreographing Postcoloniality: Reflections on the passing of Edward Saïd," *Dance Research Journal*, 35/36, (2/1), 164-169.

Julien Naggar, "Rehearsing Oppression," *alt.theatre*, Vol. 10 No. 2 (Winter 2013), 20-23.

>> Assignment: Debate assignment #3, due: Wednesday, Oct. 31

Write a debate question regarding the Joseph Boyden controversy (see below), and your response (250 words) to that question. Submit your assignment through the Moodle Forum.

Week 9 – November 1 Cultural Appropriation

Mandatory reading for Debate assignment: Joseph Boyden, "My Name is Joseph Boyden," *Maclean's* (Aug. 2, 2017)

Readings:

Kathryn Prince, "Assimilating Shakespeare in the National Arts Centre's Algonquin *King Lear*," *alt.theatre*, vol. 10 no. 2, 20-23.

Jacqueline Shea Murphy, "Introduction," in *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 1-26.

David Williams, "Remembering the Others That Are Us" in *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 67-78.

Week 10 – November 8 Footprints 1

Readings:

Lenore Metrick, "Disjunctions in Nature and Culture: Andy Goldsworthy," *Sculpture*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (June 2003), 29-33.

Laura Kenins, "Escapists and Jet Setters: Residencies and Sustainability," *C Magazine*, 119: Autumn 2013, 8-14.

>> Assignment: Moodle commentary #2, due: Wednesday, Nov. 14 (submit through the Moodle page)

Provide an example of a poster and its placement in an urban environment, and comment on how this space creates a place for a discussion of issues that the world now must confront. Give a link to the image or embed it into your post.

Week 11 – November 15 Footprints 2

Week 12 – November 22 Presentations – In Class

>> Assignment: Pecha Kucha-styled presentations + essays. Note: Accompanying essays are due on the day of your presentation.

Week 13 – November 29 Digital Futures

Reading:

Sohail Inayatullah, "Eliminating Future Shock," *Futurist.com*, Sept. 12, 2006.

Colloque Cybercorporéités: subjectivités nomades en contexte numérique

Michelle Calka, "Polymediation: The Relationship Between Self and Media" in *Beyond New Media: Discourse and Critique in a Polymediated Age*, ed. Art Herbig, Andrew F. Herrmann, Adam W. Tyma (Lanham [Maryland]: Lexington Books, 2015), 15-30.